



John L. Salomone  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

**MAYOR JEFF WRIGHT**

## MINUTES

### NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

**July 22, 2008**

Mayor Wright called the meeting to order at 6:51 PM in the Helen Nelson Room of the Newington Town Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

#### Councilors Present

Councilor Banach  
Councilor Boni  
Councilor Bottalico  
Councilor Bowen  
Councilor Cohen  
Councilor Nasinnyk  
Mayor Wright

#### Councilors Absent

Councilor Lenares  
Councilor Nagel

#### Staff Present:

John L. Salomone, Town Manager  
Lori Verreault, Executive Assistant

Mayor Wright explained that the purpose of the public hearing is to provide an opportunity for interested individuals to express their views regarding Proposed Ordinance 0709-3, "An Ordinance Establishing a Committee on Community Safety"

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Sandy Lallier, 27 Elton Drive: Mrs. Lallier spoke in support of the Safety Committee as it stands, and stated that she is unclear as to why the Council needs to add rules to the Committee as outlined in the proposed ordinance. She commented that she has been to many of the Safety Committee's meetings and has watched it become one of the Town's most effective Committees in getting things done. She commented that the setup of the Committee does not make it intimidating for citizens to come forward to express their concerns. Mrs. Lallier stated that each individual Committee member brings forth a talent that makes the Committee the talk of the Town. She stated that she does not see a need to set term time limits and requested that the Committee remain as-is. She noted that ideas brought forth from the Committee are currently being directed to the appropriate department and stated that the existing setup is working. She stated that the power of the Committee is that it gives concerned citizens a voice and remarked that the proposed ordinance is limiting that power. Mrs. Lallier stated that the Committee has done an excellent job and requested that it remains as-is. She requested that the Council leave the Committee as it stands for now and reconsider the Committee in another year.

Jennifer Walker, 100 Fisk Drive: Ms. Walker spoke in support of the current Safety Committee. She stated that she has attended Committee meetings, and based off of that has formed a group that cleaned up the New Meadow path. She stated that other neighborhood groups have also formed based off of the Committee. She also credited the Committee for bringing the Safe Routes to School program to the Town's attention and for getting the program going in Town. She stated that great things have happened on the Safety Committee, and it is one of the most effective committees in Town, due in part to the level of public participation at the meetings. Ms. Walker commented that the Committee was formed at a time when the Town was going through a difficult situation and was formed based on what the residents wanted. She remarked that the Committee members are the cream of the crop and have done a terrific job. She requested that the existing Committee members continue to serve on the Committee. She also spoke in support of having Police representation on the Committee.

Fara Alleyne, 81 Fisk Drive: Mrs. Alleyne spoke in support of keeping the current Safety Committee as-is. She stated that the current members have done a great job. She noted that it is much less intimidating for the public to speak at a Committee meeting than a Council meeting. She stated support for making the Committee permanent but with the same members of the current Committee.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: Ms. Lyons stated agreement with the previous speakers. She stated that she has attended nearly every Safety Committee meeting and remarked that the Committee is the single most effective Committee in Town. She noted that the current Committee has representatives from the Town Council, Board of Education, Police Department and Human Services and its membership is the cream of the crop. She stated that if the Council is not in favor of keeping the Committee as-is then she would be against taking a vote on the ordinance. She requested that the Council allow the Committee one more year before revisiting the issue. Ms. Lyons cautioned the Council against undoing the Committee's good work by replacing the Committee's members.

Bill Pollock, 28 Kirkham Street: Mr. Pollock spoke in support of the current Safety Committee, and stated that if the Council should decide to disband the Committee it must be prepared for all safety concerns to fall on its shoulders and should be prepared to answer some very tough questions about Town safety. He stated that if the Council is not prepared to answer those questions and correct the problems it should leave the Committee the way it is. He remarked that if it is working - leave it alone. He noted that when the Committee was formed, the Council and the Board of Education asked for the public to step up and that is what happened. He inquired as to why the Council is even debating this moot point and remarked that the Committee is doing the job that needs to be done. He requested that the Committee be left as-is, and remarked that if anything, more of these Committees are needed in Town.

Mike Sirois, 82 Fisk Drive: Mr. Sirois spoke in favor of keeping the Committee as-is. He commented that the Committee is very worthwhile. He also noted a recent article about Councilor Cohen in the Hartford Courant, and congratulated her on the article.

Ann Chamberland, 19 Fisk Drive: Ms. Chamberland stated that as a Newington resident for thirty years she would like to see the Committee remain as-is, and stated that she would like the Committee to meet monthly to address the Town's changing safety needs. She stated that the Committee members have been very objective and compassionate and commented that it is nice to have a group hear the public's needs that are at the public's own level. She stated that a team consisting of both residents and elected officials makes the average person feel like part of the solution. She stated that the Committee members should remain objective and should not have any other type of agenda. Ms. Chamberland commented that she has found participating in these meetings to be very constructive and helpful in the understanding of the importance of everyone working together as a team. She stated that she was a member of the team that cleaned up the New Meadow pathway and commented that she was very proud to be a member of that team.

Judy Igielski, 23 Old Musket Drive: Ms. Igielski congratulated Councilor Cohen and noted that she has always admired everything she has done and continues to do for the Town. Ms. Igielski also spoke in favor of keeping the Safety Committee as-is and stated that making it more official will water down what the Committee does. She stated that the safety in various neighborhoods has been a concern to many residents and recalled the time that the Neighborhood Watch program was established in Town in the 1970's, and stated that she was part of that original group that established the program that has grown throughout the years. She commented that the Safety Committee is proactive rather than reactive, and stated that there is no reason to change the Committee. Ms. Igielski inquired as to why the change is being considered. She commented that a group that is grassroots and resident-driven is one of the most important facets of the Town and stated that people who care about other

people is what makes Newington what it is today. She stated that the Committee should meet monthly and report back to the Council as needed. Ms. Igielski stated that the Committee is comprised of an excellent group of people that care, remarked that the Town has been handed a gift in the Committee and implored the Council not to lose that gift. She stated that the Committee members have the background, the interest, the caring and the leadership and implored the Council not to change anything. She stated that a Council-chosen and driven Committee will lose its effect and will lose people that really know what they are doing.

Beth DelBuono, 327 Walsh Avenue: Mrs. DelBuono stated that it is a good idea to make the Safety Committee a standing Committee. She remarked that membership terms are very important and stated that grassroots efforts throughout the Town can still happen with the proposed Committee. She noted that the public will still be invited to participate, and stated that membership terms are very important to make sure that people are challenged to do a good job on the Committee. Mrs. DelBuono stated that the Committee should be trusted to determine how often they need to meet. She stated that it is important for residents to be involved, but it is up to the residents to choose to do so. She stated that she is in favor of moving forward with the proposed ordinance.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Bowen moved to close the public hearing at 7:10pm. Motion seconded by Councilor Bottalico. Motion passed 7-0 (Deputy Mayor Lenares and Councilor Nagel absent)

Respectfully Submitted,

Mrs. Jaime Trevethan  
Clerk of the Council